

ORBH 444
Positive Organizational Analysis and Development:
An Appreciative Inquiry Approach to Change Leadership

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Overview

Effective managers and professionals in all walks of life, whether they be business executives, public administrators, organizational consultants, or labor leaders, have to become skilled in the art of “reading” the situations and people they are organizing or attempting to manage. This skill, the skill of analysis and inquiry, is involved in virtually everything managers and change agents do – strategic planning *analysis*, needs *analysis*, market *analysis*, organization *analysis*, performance *analysis*, problem-solving *analysis*, and the list goes on. Indeed, **knowledge and organizational destiny are interwoven**. Our success or failure in organizations vitally depends on our capacity to read people, groups, and organizational situations in ways that improve, add value, and lead to positive change.

This course explores and develops the art of reading and understanding organizations in ways that help us imagine, design, and develop organization excellence. First, it seeks to show how many of our conventional ideas about organizations are based on *metaphors* that lead us to see and understand organizations in partial and often limiting ways. Our images of organization, often mechanical and bureaucratic, exert a formative influence on our analytic methods, on our language and how we think, as well as on how we express ourselves on a day-to-day basis. Second, by exploring these and a number of alternative images, the course seeks to show how we can create new and more positive ways of thinking about organizations and constructive change. Thirdly, in particular, the course explores concrete tools and methods:

- Appreciative Inquiry
- Future Search & Real Time Strategic Change
- Complexity Theory and “Chaordic” Organization Design Methods
- 7-S and Other Models of Organization Analysis

Finally, the course seeks a fruitful blending of theory and practice and is filled with case stories drawn directly from our own work with large and small corporations, with communities, and with international organizations working across complex cultural boundaries.

Course Readings

1. Cooperrider, Sorenson, Whitney & Yeager & (2002) Appreciative Inquiry
2. Cooperrider, Whitney and Stavros (2003) Appreciative Inquiry Handbook: The First in a Series of AI Workbooks
3. Collins J. (2001) From Good to Great
4. Jacobs (1997) Real Time Strategic Change
5. Cameron, Dutton, and Quinn (2003) Positive Organizational Scholarship: Foundations for a New Discipline.

Session #1: May 3 Overview *and Introduction*

- It's Time to Re-Think Human Organization and Change
- Introduction to Appreciative Leadership
- Positive Image, Positive Action: Why Do Human Systems Behave the Way They Do?

Readings: selected chapters from Cameron, Dutton, and Quinn (2003) Positive Organizational Scholarship: Foundations for a New Discipline.

Session #2: May 11 *Discovery: Ways to Map the Corporate "Positive Core"*

- Images of Organization (Group Reports)
- Beyond Deficit Theories of Change
 - The AI "4-D" Cycle
 - Topic Choice (British Airways, Roadway Express)
 - The Encyclopedia of Positive Questions
 - The Art of the Question

Reading for Next Session: Real Time Strategic Change by Jacobs

Session #3: May 17 Future *Search and Real Time Strategic Change*

- Theory and Practice of a New Breakthrough Method of Planning

- Why Large Group Planning Methods are More Cost Effective and
 - Profitable
- Bringing Out the Best in Human Beings
- The Tools You Need
- Stories of Whole System Change: Nutritional Foods and Roadway

Reading for Next Session: Good to Great by Collins.

Session #4: May 25 from ***Organization Analysis to Organization Design***

- Looking at New Century Organization Design Models
- Dee Hock's Bridging Chaos and Order: The Visa Story and the UR Story
- Doing Continuity Search (Organizational History as Positive Possibility)

Session #5: June 8 Destiny: ***Sustaining Positive Change***

- The Positive Change Network (GET and Verizon Story)
- Leaders as Storytellers
- Building Appreciative Learning Cultures
- Aiming Higher

Session #6: June 14

Assignments:

Group Assignment #1: Development of Interview Protocol (due in class). Learning groups will create an appreciative interview protocol around topics of the group's choice. 5% of course grade.

Individual Assignment #2: Designing the Organization of the Future – Ideal (due by _____). After completing at least five interviews using the above interview protocol, you will take the best of what you found to dream and design the ideal organization of the future. Paper should include: (1) Why are the topics you chose important? (2) How did the interviews go – how did the questions work? What things helped improve the interview? (3) Possibility propositions for the ideal organization (including some supporting data or interview quotes that help illustrate the ideal), and (4) a

summary of your key learnings. 40% of course grade. No more than 12 pages.

Individual Paper, Assignment #3. Application Paper. This paper will synthesize learnings throughout the semester in the form of *the design of an applied project* (real or imagined) using organization development methods (e.g., future search, appreciative inquiry, values technology, real-time strategic change etc.) introduced during the class. No more than 15 pages. 55% of grade. Due: end of semester _____.

For Additional Readings on Appreciative Inquiry See Attached

Appreciative Inquiry Resources:

Bibliography on AI from

<http://ai.cwru.edu>

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